

## SERVICE OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH HIGH ABILITY

### Introduction and Rationale

The need for comprehensive services for students of high ability that are differentiated to meet their academic, social, and emotional needs has been well-documented. A 2016 review of 2015 achievement test data from across the U.S. not limited to those identified as high ability showed large percentages of American students perform well above grade level (Makel, Matthews, Peters, Rambo-Hernandez, and Plucker). According to Reis, Burns, & Renzulli (1992), elementary students identified as high ability spend as much as 50% of their time working with curriculum they have already mastered. When the general education curriculum fails to provide new learning experiences and skills for students who have already mastered the standards being taught, these students do not have an appropriate learning environment and are being denied appropriate educational services.

A comprehensive review of the research (Rogers, 2007) indicates that services leading to the greatest achievement gains for high ability students include the following:

- Ability Grouping: Opportunities for high ability learners to socialize and to learn with like-ability peers
- Daily Challenge: Opportunity for daily challenge in identified areas of high ability
- Acceleration: Opportunities for various forms of content, subject and grade acceleration as needed
- Differentiation: Differentiation in pace, amount of review and practice, focus on larger concepts, and interdisciplinary connections
- Independent Work: Opportunities to work independently in areas of passion and talent

When planning appropriate programming and services for students of high ability, corporations must consider:

- How high ability students will be grouped, organized, or provided with individual plans for the most effective learning;
- What training the teacher has or needs to most effectively teach and plan learning experiences for students of high ability;
- What content, standards, and pace are most appropriate for these students; and
- What instructional models, strategies, projects, and products are most appropriate for promoting academic growth?

One specific type of programming for students of high ability cannot meet the needs of the many levels and types of talents and abilities evidenced by these students, K-12.

**Therefore, a variety of services and programming options are needed and described below.** Services for high ability students are included in the Multifaceted Student Assessment Plan and are reported on the high ability grant final report submitted to the IDOE.

### **Decision Making Process for High Ability Service Options**

- Identify according to a valid and reliable process.
- Look for any outliers who may need to skip a grade or skip a subject. Consider those cases individually, including consulting the Iowa Acceleration Scale to assist in making decisions.
- Identify the number of students for both High Ability Math and High Ability Language Arts (General Intellectual), HA math only, and HA Language Arts only. This will change from year to year and from grade to grade, depending on the group of students; therefore, service options for particular grade levels might change from year to year.
- Consider the district's options in the following order. The order is determined by the greatest likelihood of providing appropriately differentiated curriculum and instruction as required by Indiana Code.
  - ❖ **Self-Contained Classrooms** In this model all of the students in the class have been identified as high ability, and all of the instruction can be at the appropriate pace and level. Be flexible in thinking and consider a Magnet School for the district, a self-contained classroom by grade, or a multi-age classroom. It is best for the teacher to have a High Ability License. This model provides the most opportunity for appropriately differentiated curriculum and instruction in core content areas.
  - ❖ **Between Class Ability Grouping by Subject Area** In this model, the schedule will need to be constructed so that all students at the grade level have math at the same time and all have language arts at the same time. During the two subject specific times, students will be grouped at their instructional level with the identified high ability learners in the same group with a licensed high ability teacher. The remainder of the day, students would be in heterogeneous classrooms.
  - ❖ **Cluster Grouping** In this model, students are ability grouped to provide a narrowed instructional range in each class; however, all classes have a group of average learners. One class has high ability and a group of average learners. Other classes have some above average students, an average group, and some below average students. This model requires fidelity of implementation to remain true to the model throughout the year (with

transfers in and out). The cluster teacher needs a High Ability License.

- Provide additional services for individual students, depending on need or exceptional ability. These are likely combined with group services explained above. Examples of services for individuals: On Line Courses, Mentorships, Internships, ELL Services, IEP Services, etc.

### Decision Making Process for Services



## Service Options by Grade Level Groupings

Grades K – 5 Service Options		
Options for services for groups of high ability students in order of ease of implementation	Considerations: Flexibility is key; different options might work in different grades for different students. Avoid having one “Program” which is the only option. You may have a program with other modifications for individuals or groups based upon needs.	Added Cost
<b>Full-time, self-contained class or self-contained multi-age split</b>	Full-time placement with other students of high ability and differentiated curriculum and instruction by a high ability licensed teacher produces the greatest academic gains for high ability students.	None if class sizes remain similar to those of general education
<b>Magnet school for students of high ability</b>	This method is usually found in larger districts or in cooperating districts. This has the same advantages listed above for self-contained and the additional advantage of having “special” subjects taught at an advanced level.	Transportation and perhaps additional class costs
<b>Between Class Grouping for Math and again for Language Arts</b>	The practice of “trading students” among teachers so that each teacher has a narrower range of abilities for the chosen subject or topic. The groups will require further differentiation in order to meet the needs of the students within them, but this will be easier for the teacher to provide. This usually entails having math at the same time for a grade level and having language arts at another common time during the day for each grade level. This can combine students who are of high ability in general intellectual area with those who are of high ability in a specific academic area. High ability students can be in all homerooms, but are grouped together during math and	None

	language arts' time. The teacher for math and for language arts will need high ability training or certification, and the curriculum will need to be at a higher level.	
<b>Resource room</b>	Students of high ability are "pulled out" for regular instruction in math and/or language arts with a high ability resource teacher. This instruction occurs daily and replaces the grade level core content for the specific subject areas; if it has only a general enrichment focus, there are unlikely to be substantial academic effects. The teacher will need high ability training or certification. Minimum contact time is recommended to be 150 minutes per week, per subject area.	Cost of additional staff
<b>Cluster groups</b>	This can be used when there are not enough students of high ability for a separate class. It is best that this class not also have another special needs group. The teacher will need high ability training or certification and the curriculum for the high ability students will be different from the typical grade level curriculum. Care must be taken to place new students in the appropriate group so that the original instructional range for each class is not expanded.	None
<b>Options for individuals beyond the grouping options</b>		
<b>Early entrance to kindergarten</b>	Good for a student who is HA, academically advanced, independent, and motivated. Child may also need advanced curriculum and instruction in the new grade placement. Use Iowa Acceleration Scale to facilitate decision making.	None
<b>Skipping kindergarten</b>		
<b>Grade skipping</b>		
<b>Subject skipping</b>	Good for a student who is achieving well beyond others in a single subject.	None
<b>Internships, mentorships, distance learning, IEP</b>	These can be used in combination with other options.	None

Grades 6-8 Service Options		
Options for services for groups of high ability students in order of ease of implementation	Considerations: Flexibility is key; different options might work in different grades for different students. Avoid having one “Program” which is the only option. You may have a program with other modifications for individuals or groups based upon needs.	Added Cost
Special advanced classes or “honors” classes by subject	This can combine students who are HA in general intellectual with those who are HA in a specific academic area. Curriculum must be designed for high ability learners. These classes need G/T licensed teachers. If non-identified students are included, the curriculum and instruction will need to be further differentiated.	None
High school classes while in middle school	Some students are ready to compact instruction, and they are ready to take high school math courses while in middle school. Math classes will need to be taught at a rigorous level as preparation for the highest levels of math in high school. High school science or foreign language may also be taught to middle school students who skip a level or two of math, science, or foreign language. These classes can be taught in the middle school or in the high school, depending on local situations.	None
Options for individuals beyond the grouping options		
Early entrance to high school	Some students can skip a full year or do a semester in seventh grade and a semester in eighth grade.	None
Grade or subject skipping -	The student should be allowed to go to the high school for certain subjects if needed; this option is called dual enrollment.	None

<b>Distance learning classes from universities or Advanced Placement courses</b>	These require a student who is self-directed and a teacher who can monitor progress and provide onsite help.	Tuition for online options; AP exam fees for courses not math, science or English
<b>Internships, mentorships, IEP</b>	These options can be used in combination with other methods.	None
<b>Grades 9-12 Service Options</b>		
<b>Options for services for groups of high ability students in order of ease of implementation</b>	<b>Considerations:</b> <b>Flexibility is key; different options might work in different grades for different students. Avoid having one “Program” which is the only option. You may have a program with other modifications for individuals or groups based upon needs.</b>	<b>Added Cost</b>
<b>Advanced or “honors” classes by subject</b>	The curriculum and expectations are significantly more rigorous than the regular option.	None
<b>Advanced Placement or Cambridge International courses</b>	Curriculum, teacher training, and exams are offered by the College Board. These should be available prior to the senior year.	Exam fees for some classes
<b>International Baccalaureate Program</b>	Because of the cost and rigorous nature of these offerings, they are usually found only at large high schools.	IB program school fee
<b>Dual enrollment in high school and college</b>	This is in addition to, not a replacement for Advanced Placement courses. Investigate the course requirements and any tuition required for credit. Be	Tuition for university credit



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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